

Message Text

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EXDIS, FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOL RPT CAIRO 15584 ACTION SECSTATE 22 JUN 78 QUOTE

S E C R E T CAIRO 15584

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV EG

SUBJECT: MARWAN ON SADAT'S MOOD

1. SUMMARY: MARWAN EXPRESSES WORRY ABOUT SADAT'S DE-LIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN AND ATTRIBUTES IT TO BAD INFLUENCE OF SALEM AND OSMAN. MRS. SADAT ALSO CONCERNED AND INTENDS DISCUSS WHOLE SUBJECT WITH HER HUSBAND. END SUMMARY.

2. AT MOROCCAN RECEPTION LAST EVENING, I HAD OPPORTUNITY FOR BRIEF CHAT WITH ASHRAF MARWAN. SINCE I KNEW FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT MARWAN HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT SADAT'S DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN, I TOLD HIM OF MY
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PERTINENT TALK WITH THE PRESIDENT AND OF THE LATTER'S REACTION. THE PRESIDENT HAD REPLIED THAT HE WILL SHORTLY ANNOUNCE A "SURPRISE" WHICH WILL CONSOLIDATE DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT. WHEN, THEREFORE, ANNOUNCEMENT MADE THAT SADAT WOULD ON JUNE 20 ADDRESS AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASU, I HAD HOPED THAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT DO SO AT THAT MEETING. HE HAD NOT DONE SO AND, HAVING LISTENED TO

SADAT'S SPEECH, I HAD RATHER WONDERED WHY IT HAD EVEN BEEN NECESSARY TO MAKE IT. AS AN AMERICAN OFFICIAL AND A FRIEND OF THE PRESIDENT, I COULD NOT HELP BUT BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF SADAT'S DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN AND EVEN SOME OF THE THINGS SAID IN THE RECENT SPEECH. HE HAD, FOR EXAMPLE, AGAIN SCOFFED AT WESTERN PRESS CRITICISM. WHILE THE PRESIDENT MUST BE THE BEST JUDGE OF WHAT HE CONSIDERS NECESSARY, I HAD MADE A SPECIAL POINT OF EMPHASIZING TO HIM THE PERILS OF RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESS IN TERMS OF HIS IMAGE IN THE UNITED STATES AND HE HAD INDICATED SOME UNDERSTANDING OF THIS ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM.

3. MARWAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE IS EQUALLY CONCERNED. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE HAD A FOUR-HOUR, FRANK TALK WITH SADAT A FEW DAYS EARLIER ON NEGATIVE IMPACT OF SADAT'S DELIBERALIZATION CAMPAIGN. SADAT HAD INSISTED THAT HE HAS DONE MORE FOR DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT THAN ANYONE ELSE. IN SUPPORT OF HIS CONTENTION, THE PRESIDENT HAD NOTED THAT THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS ARE GONE, THE COURTS ARE FREE, PARTIES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED, ETC. BUT THE FREEDOMS HE HAD GRANTED HAD BEEN ABUSED BY THE WAFD AND THE LEFTISTS AND THIS COULD NOT BE TOLERATED. MARWAN CLAIMED THAT BOTH PRIMIN MAMDUH SALEM AND OSMAN AHMED OSMAN HAVE FOR PAST SIX WEEKS BEEN WORKING UNRELENTINGLY ON SADAT TO PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT THAT THE ATTACKS ON THE CABINET

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AND ON OSMAN ARE REALLY AIMED AT HIM. (SOME OF THEM ARE.) THE PRESIDENT, MARWAN LAMENTED, HAS BOUGHT THEIR CONTENTION AND, AS AHIF ULT, HAS IN HIS RECENT PUBLIC SPEECHES AND ACTIONS LASHED OUT TO WARN CRITICS. SADAT'S SPEECH OF TWO DAYS AGO HAD BEEN PROMPTED BY THE PRESIDENT'S BELIEF THAT THE "YOUNG PROPLE" OF EGYPT DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN THROUGH THESE PAST THIRTY YEARS. HENCE, THE LONG DISQUISITION ABOUT THE PAST AND HOW THE JULY, 1952 AND MAY, 1971 REVOLUTIONS HAD CORRECTED THOSE ABUSES.

4. ACCORDING MARWAN, ONE OF THE THINGS SADAT PROPOSES TO SAY IN HIS JULY 22 SPEECH IS THAT HE IS READY TO FORGIVE AND FORGET THE PAST AND WILL RELEASE MOST OF THOSE WHO WERE ACCUSED OF ABUSES DURING THE NASSIR PERIOD. SADAT, MARWAN SAID, BELIEVES SUCH AN ACTION ON HIS PART SHOULD MAKE EGYPTIANS APPRECIATE THAT THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM STILL PREVAILS. HE HAD WARNED SADAT THAT SUCH AN ACTION, WHILE COMMENDABLE, WILL NOT OF ITSELF BE ENOUGH TO REFURBISH THE PRESIDENT'S TARNISHED IMAGE. SADAT SHOULD GET RID OF OSMAN AND REMOVE SALEM AS PRIMIN. THE PRESIDENT REMAINED UNCONVINCED.

5. MARWAN ADDED THAT MRS. SADAT IS ALSO WORRIED ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT ACTIONS (SHE SAT IN THE FRONT ROW DURING THE ASU SPEECH). MRS. SADAT HAD GONE TO ALEXANDRIA EARLIER IN THE DAY IN ORDER TO TALK TO THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THE WHOLE SUBJECT.

6. WE AGREED THAT, AS FRIENDS OF SADAT, WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO WORK ON THE PRESIDENT IN ORDER TO POINT OUT TO HIM THE DAMAGE HE IS DOING TO HIS OWN REPUTATION AT HOME AND ABROAD. EILTS

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